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TAGS: [KPKO](#) [KVIR](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [EUN](#) [SW](#)  
SUBJECT: NEW SWEDISH DEFENSE PRIORITIES: SWEDEN PUTS  
NEUTRALITY IN THE DUSTBIN OF HISTORY

SUMMARY

1. (C) Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and NATO Policy (DASD) James Townsend met with Ministry of Defense (MoD) Director General for Political Affairs Johan Raeder for bilateral defense consultations (BDCs) on July 17-18, the first such talks of what is expected to be an annual event. Townsend also met with Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Director for Security Policy Nils Daag and with MoD State Secretary Hakan Jevrell (the number two at MoD). The BDCs focused on the new Swedish Defense Bill and explored the possibility of expanding the level of U.S.-Sweden defense-to-defense dialogue. The new Defense Bill ends conscription, changing Swedish contingency planning from a large force deployable in one to three years to a small all-volunteer force deployable within a week to six months. In a significant break with the past, it also changes Swedish defense priorities, focusing on international threats to Swedish sovereignty and regional security, not just threats to its territorial integrity. In addition, Sweden's changing security policy entails that any attack in the region would be viewed as affecting Sweden too, and Sweden "will not remain passive" in such an event. Raeder noted that the new Defense Bill will be implemented in the 2010-14 time frame with all changes to be completed by 2017.

2. (C) Daag and DASD Townsend discussed Afghanistan, with Daag noting that for the foreseeable future most of the increased EU activity in Afghanistan would be on the civilian, not the military side. Jevrell expressed a desire to address NATO-EU relations during the Swedish EU Presidency, and views Afghanistan as an opportunity to expand NATO-EU cooperation. Raeder argued for increased U.S.-Sweden dialogue on Russia, as "one must understand Russia" to understand defense issues in the Baltic Sea. End Summary.

U.S.-Swedish Defense Dialogue

3. (C) Dialogue between U.S. and Swedish defense ministries had been at a more strategic level in the 1990s, focusing on topics like the Balkans and the Baltics, MFA Director Daag noted. However, in recent years it had become "more practical," dealing with procurement and defense trade issues. Strategic talks remain important too, he implied. While noting the criticism that the EU has not been doing enough on major challenges like Afghanistan, Daag said that it is important to remember that the EU's European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) only began eight years ago. Sweden would work to increase EU participation in Afghanistan during its Presidency, he stated.

4. (C) MOD Director General Raeder commented that it would be quite helpful politically if the United States were to consult with Sweden on issues related to the Baltics, Afghanistan, and Russia. Such bilateral cooperation strengthens the legitimacy of GOS policy positions. Sweden views itself as among the most stable partners in Afghanistan

and needs USG recognition of that to sustain the commitment politically.

#### New Defense Posture

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15. (C) On June 16, Parliament passed the new Defense Bill. The bill was initially scheduled for Parliamentary action last year, but it was delayed after the Russian invasion of Georgia. This extra time allowed security experts to review the strategic assessments underpinning the conclusions in the bill and to analyze Swedish needs for future contingencies. The experts concluded that "a clear ability to rapidly deploy forces" was essential, and that Sweden's current defense capabilities--putting tens of thousands of troops into the field one to three years after a mobilization decision is made--was "obsolete." Instead, Sweden needs forces readily available within one week to half a year, Raeder told DASD Townsend. Due to this new posture, the Government of Sweden has decided to take the controversial step to end conscription and move to an all-volunteer force.

16. (C) Regarding Sweden's changing security policy, Raeder underscored the new declaration of solidarity Sweden has made: "we cannot foresee that a military attack would be directed only at Sweden." Rather, aggression in the region would affect more than one country. Therefore, "we will view any attack in the region as affecting us too. If Denmark, for example, were attacked, then Sweden will not remain passive," he said. Similarly, if Turkey were to join the EU, Sweden's policy is now that it could not remain passive if Turkey were attacked; "of course, what we

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can do there is different from what we can do here in our region," Raeder said. Given these new policies of solidarity, Sweden must be prepared to give and receive military assistance.

17. (C) Swedish security experts also concluded that the military material supply system needs to be more responsive. Sweden can no longer afford to develop all defense systems by itself; instead, it will need to buy more products "off the shelf," including from other countries. "We will develop it if we cannot find it overseas, but our first priority will be to look in the international market," Raeder said, in a marked departure from the postwar symbiosis between defense industries and the military.

#### Changing Priorities

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18. (C) Sweden's new priorities for the armed forces have not been discussed publicly, Raeder said. For years, Swedish military forces were directed to: defend Sweden; uphold Sweden's territorial integrity; engage in peacekeeping; and support civil society in times of crisis. Under the new policy, participation in peacekeeping operations obliges Swedish forces to be ready to conduct operations in Sweden, its region, and outside of its region. Protection of Sweden has been extended beyond defending its territorial integrity, to encompass national sovereignty as well, which can include national sovereign rights outside of Swedish territory. Raeder said "we now understand that our interests do not stop at our national borders. Instead of protecting our ships only in our waters, we now must be able to protect sea lines of communication. We want armed forces that can conduct operations nationally or internationally in support of our sovereign rights." Raeder noted that the new Defense Bill will be implemented in the 2010-14 time frame with all changes to be completed by 2017.

#### EU and Afghanistan

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19. (C) MFA Director Daag indicated that for the foreseeable

future most of the increased EU activity in Afghanistan would be in the civilian activities. He noted that it is important to put the "R" (reconstruction) back into "PRT" (Provincial Reconstruction Team). Daag also raised the growing importance of explaining to the Swedish public why Swedish troops are patrolling in Afghanistan. "It must be clear that what happens there affects us here," he said. Jevrell noted that Sweden was "impressed" by the renewed American efforts in Afghanistan, but conceded that many EU agencies were skeptical of the ability of the U.S. to do the "civil side" well. He agreed, however, that Afghanistan is an opportunity to expand the NATO-EU partnership.

Russia

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¶10. (C) Raeder said that "to understand the High North and issues in the Baltic Sea (the U.S.) has to understand Russia." He noted that, "for (Sweden), Russia is always present." Raeder said that Sweden wants expanded dialogue with the USG on Russia, "to share our views about what's happening there." Sweden assesses that Russia has lowered the threshold to use violence, though Moscow understands that the Caucasus are not the Baltics. Jevrell noted that different Nordic countries have different views on Russia, conceding that there is a vigorous debate in Sweden on Russia's regional role and intentions.

Nordic Solidarity

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¶11. (C) Peter Gothe, MoD Deputy Director-General and Head of Department for Security and International Affairs, noted that the Nordic foreign ministers have discussed military solidarity, but their declaration was weaker than what the Swedish MoD had hoped for. Denmark and Norway were hesitant to go further, out of concern for their NATO obligations, whereas the Finns were more positive. In reply to DASD Townsend's question about why the Nordic nations felt the need to issue a solidarity declaration now, Raeder explained that the Nordic solidarity declaration arose from joint defense planning, "which shows real intent, even more than political statements."

¶12. (U) DASD Townsend has approved this cable.  
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